

RELIGION

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REASON

UNITED.

*By a Lover of his Country.*



The Second Addition.

LONDON:

Printed in the Year, 1712.

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THE

# PREFACE.

Sober Reader,

**T**HE Design of the following Discourse, is, an Essay to Allay, if Possible, the Heats and Animosities, with which one Party, or Religious Society, treats another; that if they cannot Unite in Judgment, they might, for the Ease of the Government, their own Interest, and Benefit of Posterity, Unite in Affection: For as we have not all alike Outsides neither in Shape or Complexion, no more are our Intellectual Conceptions.

And as it would be Madness to Quarrel about the First, so it would be little less to Persecute about the Last.

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'Tis



## The PREFACE.

*'Tis true, the Primitive Christians were of one Heart and Mind; but that which made them so, was, the Sword of the Spirit, not of the Magistrate: And where that Spirit rules, it will produce the like Effects, but without it, 'tis Vanity to think of bringing People into such a Unity; but much more Vain to think of Persecuting People into it: Since 'tis God that must Perswade Japhet to dwell in the Tents of Shem; and till by him Men are so Perswaded, the Magistrate loseth his Labour to force into that Tent or Church, that at best is but supposed to be the True One.*

*One thing I intreat my Reader (viz.) That he would endeavour Rather to Re-examine his Conscience, and Retrospect his Education, to know whether his Faith and Practices are Reasonable, than value himself upon Church Membership.*

Religion



# Religion and Reason UNITED.

**H**AD Mankind no Divine Impression on his Mind of a *Deity*, or of the *Immortality of the Soul*, of a *future State of Rewards and Punishments*?

'Tis reasonable to suppose, that the greatest part would avoid troubling either their Minds or Heads about what is called *Religion*.

But this Language would be as Universally heard and believed, as expressed (*viz.*) *Let us Eat and Drink, &c. for to morrow (there's an End of us) we must Die.*

But since the Contrary is most certain, and that all the Inventions of Men, and Artifices of Satan, are not able to Suppress, or totally Silence, those Dreadful Alarms we are made to hear in our own Consciences; it becomes our Interest, as well as Duty, to apply our selves, with all fervency of Spirit, to such a Course of Life, as may *First* free us from that Perturbation of Mind, which infallibly is (sooner or later) entail'd on an Evil Conscience. And *Secondly*, obtain the Assurance of a Lot in

that future Peace, Kingdom and Glory, that shall have no End.

*Religion* then is that Science, which perfectly to Understand and Practise, is the only means for accomplishing the aforesaid End (*viz.*) Quiet the Conscience here, and Assure the Soul of Blessedness hereafter.

True it is, the Word hath often been abused, and the intent of it not seldom mistaken; yea, to that degree, that what God designed in it (who is Just and Reasonable in all his ways) for an Universal Advantage to Mankind, hath been engross'd, and made the property of a Party, who have been so far from Converting and Curing of Souls by it, that it hath not failed of being the greatest Stumbling to those that have taken reasonable ways to save their own.

And this hath chiefly sprung from Two Roots: The First is, the Immorality of those pretended Doctors, whose pernicious Example have had this Effect, either to make the Observer Conclude, there is no such thing as *Religion* in the World; but that talking of it is only a Political Contrivance to subject the People, that they may be the more unlike to give their Superiours Trouble in Governing them.

Or else that this Doctor is but a meer *Quack*, who Prates about *Religion* no otherwise in Earnest than to get Money by it; which, what a vast Prejudice that is to the Cause of *Religion* in general, is not hard to determine. For if he that seems devoted to *Religion*, gives no better Proofs of the Power and *Vertue* of it, than only

ly to talk of Curing others, whilst his own Distemper is so Notorious, no Marvel if others that are Afflicted despise both the Man and the Means; the last as Defective, as the first a meer Fop.—Thinking Men, who have the use of their Senses, and believe the Service of God to be Reasonable, as well as Religious, are of the Judgment, That 'tis Impossible for the Design of *Religion* to be answered, until by a Purge of the Law, these Blasphemers of *God* and *Religion*, and Prophaners of all that is Sacred, be totally Ejected; and a Bar set at the Church-Doors, to Prohibit every such Person from taking the Name of the Holy *God*, or his *Religion* in their Mouths, under any such Character.

And that this seems to fall under the Magistrates Observation and Correction, as well as Cure, is not hard to Prove: For, if *God will not hold him Guiltless that takes his Name in Vain*; ought not the Magistrate, who is God's Minister of Justice, look to it, that none pass his Stamp of Approbation, that are so absolutely Excepted in the declared Law of him, the Magistrate Represents?

For if *God saith, I will not hold him Guiltless that taketh my Name in Vain*: And the Magistrate saith otherwise; What Account can he give of his Trust and Stewardship?—And if he that is an Immoral Ecclesiastick, don't take the Name of God in Vain, in the worst Sense, Pray what is the Sin and Guilt? Indeed there is one case in which it is not in Vain, and that is the same with the common Beggars, (*viz.*) To get Money, whose Prayers and Blessings are



the same Minute turn'd into Curses, and their Light into Profound Darkness, if no Oyl appears to continue the Lamp.

But to proceed, if Men of Immoral Conversations shall be admitted (or connived at) by the Magistrate, to be Pastors over the People, to feed them with Holy Food, 'tis certain, that in a little time, *Religion* will be wholly Lost, and the *People* Starved, instead of being Fed; and Destroyed, instead of being Saved; For how is it possible for him to Feed a Flock that never had ought to Feed them withal? And that the Immoralist hath nothing to Feed them withal that is Good, is Evident; since himself to all Goodness is a Reprobate.

Again, no Man can lead another farther than he goes himself; but how far the Immoralist is gone in the Way of God, is not to be disputed. Again, the Blind are *fit* to be Leaders to none; and none but those that are so with a witness can esteem them *fit* for it: But if such *will* follow them, our Saviour tells us where the end of their Journey will be. But who is a Blinder Creature than an Immoral Clergy-Man. However, none but the Reverse to him can see God.

Therefore, they that would go to God must have better Leaders, or else they can never come to him. But to

The Second, which is *Ambition*, it is a Passion that, like *Pharaoh's* lean Kine, Devours all that comes in the way of it, and is nevertheless as Hungry and Ill-favoured at last as at first: That Kingdom or Common-Wealth that

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is Infected with store of 'em, shall never be at Rest long; unless they have the liberty to Gore those themselves have Voted Heterodox, and to furnish them with Tools to do it, *Cum Privilegio*; nothing like Interweaving themselves with the State: So that the Civil Magistrate shall be made Believe, 'tis his Duty and Interest always, either to confer more Honours and Profits on them, or else to suppress their more Vertuous Neighbours, under the Notion of their being *Hereticks*; which is not the least Prejudice to *Religion* in general, as well as it is not seldom the like to the State; since the common People are more inclinable to favour and unite with the Sufferer, than joyn with the Persecutor, Suffering (generally speaking) rather making Profelytes, than answering the End of the Persecutor; especially where the Sufferer has the answer of a better Conscience than the Persecutor, which not seldom is the priviledge of Dissent. But if Vertuous Living under a Dissent from a National Church Liturgy be interpreted Irreligious, and renders the Professors Obnoxious to the Laws, whilst Immorality goes Unpunished: How is it possible that the Interest of *Religion* can be advanced, since the Sufferings that attend a Vertuous Man, are greater than what falls upon the Irreligious and Profane? Which shews, that whatever Pretences are made for *Religion*, the Practice is unreasonable; and therefore is no longer held for Truth, than whilst the Rod obligeth the Fearful and Cowardly to say *Amen*, contrary to the Perswasion of their own Minds.

But

But three things are the design of the Ambitious *Clergy-Men* (viz.) *Wealth, Honour and Power*; all which renders Religion the more doubtful and unreasonable: Since *neither* was the mark, that the best Example that ever was in the World aim'd at, but his Doctrine and Practice the reverse to it all. And that they can be his Followers and Disciples, that thus apparently contradict both his Doctrine and Practice, is unreasonable to believe. And therefore, that *Church* that will indulge Ambition in her *Clergy*, is as remote from the Basis of true Religion, as she that Connives at Immorality; and *both*, the reasonable part of Mankind must conclude to be a great way off from Truth, and consequently Irreligious and Unreasonable. Nor can it be thought Reasonable, that ever the Civil Magistrate should be able to allay those Evil Spirits, that such Ambitious Men are able to raise from the contrary Winds of Doctrine, that will inevitably blow in a National Church, which will make more work for the Magistrate to reconcile, than he is capable of performing, as many Instances might be brought for Proof. Besides, till they all speak one and the same thing at home, 'tis unreasonable to think, that Dissenters should return to that Church which is not in Unity with it self.

But again, an Ambitious *Clergy* cannot bear contradiction: And therefore, when what they have stamp'd with the Seal of Orthodox meets with a Non-reception, the Sword of the Magistrate must be employed to force its entrance; which



which is so much the more Irreligious, for that it is so unreasonable; since 'tis reasonable Arguments, and not Blows, that must Convince the Understanding; and till the *Clergy* can furnish themselves therewith, they are never like to be free from Dissenters.

But if their Ambition will admit of no Competitor (as most certain it will not) nothing but Persecution can follow their Venomous Doctrine, where the Magistrate is become **more a Party than the common Father** of the People. Which, that he may not, is the humble Request of all his Dissenting Children; that though he hath an Eldest Son, he may not, to Gratifie *his* Ambition, destroy the rest from enjoying their Natural Birth-right. In short, to make an Image, and then by the help of the Civil Magistrate, oblige every body to fall down and Worship, upon pain of Corporal and Pecuniary Punishment, is what hath produced so much Irreligion, &c. in the World, and frustrated the design of Religion in general, as well as been a Stumbling Block in the way of those Seekers that would extreamly rejoyce to find the way that leads to Everlasting Blessedness, (obscured by the Dust the Immoral and Ambitious *Clergy* have raised) which tho' they, viz. the common People, know but little; yet know so much, that Immorality and Ambition is never the way to it.

These things being premised, the following Considerations are *Candidly Offered* to the Serious Thoughts of the Impartial, for Cure of our present Maladies, that the just and reasonable design

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These things being premised, the following Considerations are *Candidly Offered* to the Serious Thoughts of the Impartial, for Cure of our present Maladies, that the just and reasonable design



sign of Religion may be answered, that God may be glorified, our Consciences eased, and Souls saved: That the Government may be freed from unnecessary Trouble, and the People enjoy perfect Tranquility.

*First*, That it's not Opinion, but Holy Living is the design of *Religion*.

*Secondly*, That the Principles that lead to it are few, reasonable and plain.

*Thirdly*, That making of *Creeds*, not to be found in Holy Scripture, is at best but Imaginary, or making an Idol, and therefore not to be bowed unto.

*Fourthly*, That Liberty of Conscience is every Man's Birth-right, and that it cannot be invaded, without violating the Laws of the Land.

*Fifthly*, That Morality may be encouraged, since it is so great a part of Religion, that without it none can be Religious.

*1st*. That it is not Opinion, but Holy Living is the design of *Religion*.

It was the Condition of the great Charter, granted to him that was the Patriarch of the Church, before the Law, on Tables of Stone, was given to his numerous Posterity (see *Gen. 15. 1.* compare with *Gen. 17. 1.*) **Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, &c.** No written Law now, consequently no *Creeds*; yet the *Law written in the Heart* was Abraham's Rule, by which he was to walk before God to Perfection.

Heb. 12. 14. Again, *If without Holiness no Man can see God*, without Holiness no Man can walk with him: But the first is true, therefore the last.

For

For want of it the Old World was destroyed; because of it (and not untelligible *Creeds*) Noab was saved, *Gen. 6. 9.*

The Tenor of the Covenant in *Horeb* center'd in it, (*viz.*) to implant *Love* and *Fear* in the People to God-ward, that thereby they might be kept from Sin, (*Exod. 20. 20.* compare with *Deut. 30.*) but what that Dispensation began, the Gospel finisheth; what that pointed out in Types and Shadows, the Gospel substantially compleateth: Which is to give *Power* to do, as well as *Light* to know, what the good and acceptable Will of God is; since on the *knowing* and *doing* thereof our present and future Happiness depends; and this is as it must be the only design of true Religion.

Again, Let us consider what the Institutor of the *Christian Religion* saith hereupon, (*Mat. 7. 21.*) *It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, but he that doth the Will of my Father, that shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven:* From which we are to take Notice.

1. That acknowledgments to unquestionable Truths (such as calling him *Lord*, that is the unquestionable Lord and God, and praying to him as the only Lord and Saviour) doth not entitle Men to the Kingdom.

2. But *doing* the Will of God, is, not only prefer'd to the acknowledgment of him as Lord, but made the only Condition, upon which admittance into the Kingdom is granted. For in the next Verse he adds, *Many* (saith he) *will say to me, Have we not Propheesied in thy Name, and cast out Devils, and done mighty Works,* (per-

(perhaps built Churches, Hospitals, &c.) *in thy Name*. All which was not done by *Infidels*, but by them whose Judgments and Understandings (as well as Opinions) were strong concerning the Verity of his Authority; yet for all this *Knowledge* and *Profession*, and at some times Enjoyment, *Depart from me*, &c. was the Sentence, grounded upon their evil Works; for though they knew much, and professed much, and enjoyed much too, yet they were Unholy, Hearers, and not Doers, Knowers of *his Will*, but Doers of their *own*: And therefore shut out of the Kingdom.

This much from Christ himself, in Vindication of the First Proposition: Next, let us hear what *His Apostle* (as well as the Gentiles) saith to the matter in hand, see 1 Cor. 13. where he tells of Gifts, as *Prophecies, Tongues, Knowledge of all Mysteries, Hospitality towards the Poor*, and *Faith to remove Mountains*; yea, *to lay down Life for Opinions sake*: Yet all this (he saith) *without Charity* (or Divine Love) *is but an empty Sound*, &c. I hope my Authority is so far Unquestionable, that I need seek for no farther Proof for my Assertion, (*viz.*) That *itis* not Opinion, but Holiness was and is the Design of Religion; for without it, Religion is no more than a Body without Breath or Spirit, which will soon putrifie, to the Annoyance of all that are near it.

Now if Holiness of Life was part of the universal Creed of all the Christian World, and the Hearts and Heads of Men were as much taken up with thinking how they might practise

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Give it, as their Hearts and Heads are full of Matters of far less Moment (I will not say what, though all the Presses in *Europe* has been filled with it, as well as many Goals crowded, Goods spoiled, and Lives lost about it) it would be a happy Day for us.

But that I may be plainly understood, I add, that by *Holiness*, I mean such a strict, awful, and circumspect Life, as with Detestation and Abhorrence, shuns those Paths that leads to the breach of Negative Precepts, as well as with Fervency of Spirit, suitable to the Nobility of the Cause, is studious to approve it self in the Performance of what is enjoyned *to be done*, by the same Authority; the other, as above, is *forbidden*; and in short, is no other than a Life conformed to the Will of God, in denying all Ungodliness on the one hand, and pursuing all Vertue on the other hand.

And that this is the great design of *Religion*, is reasonable to believe, both from Reason it self, Scripture, and Divine Inspiration; and he that so lives, deserves the Protection of all Civil Governments, being the best of Subjects; for he never gives the Magistrate trouble: Since he that bears the Sword, is, *for a Praise to them that do Well*, and is only a *Terror to Evil Doers*, which such a Man is not. From what hath hitherto been said, these Considerations will naturally follow.

*First*, That he that made us Holy and Good at first, and put us in a Capacity so to continue, and sent his Son to *break our Bonds* by his Death, desires that out of our Laps'd State we may be

Resto-

Restored, to Live in a perfect Union and Fellowship with him again, to all Eternity, *Ezek.* 18. 32. and 33. 11. *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. *1 Tim.* 1. 15. and 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Titus* 2. 14. *1 John* 3. 7.

Secondly, Nevertheless, without doing his Will, 'tis impossible to enjoy that Union and Peace, &c. *Mat.* 7. 21, 22.

Thirdly, That his Will is our Sanctification or Holiness, *Luke* 1. 74, 75. *1 Thess.* 3. 13. and 4. 3. *Rom.* 6. 19, 22. *2 Cor.* 7. 1.

Fourthly, That he which hath ordained the End, hath also provided the means, *Gen.* 3. 15. *Deut.* 18. 15. *Ezek.* 18. 32. *1 Tim.* 1. 15.

Fifthly, That that means is Primarily the *Second Adam*, or *Lord from Heaven*, by whom the universal Gift of Grace is bestowed on all Men; prejudiced by the Fall of the *First Adam*, Secondarily by the Holy Scripture, and a Spiritual Ministry, &c. *Rom.* 5. 18, 19. *Tit.* 2. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12.

Sixthly and Lastly, This Gracious Gift so universally given, is, *Grace for Grace*, *Light for Light*, *Spirit for Spirit*, to Spirit or Quicken us to Holiness, and is as much the Common Priviledge of all Men, as all Men were Damaged by *Adam's Fall*. (*Luke* 2. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *John* 1. 9, 16. *1 Cor.* 12. 7.) And if so, there is no Reason for the *Church of Rome*, or any other *Church*, to impose Articles of Faith on others, or Monopolize, *Religion* or *Truth* to themselves; since he that Lives conformable to this Gift, is a Member of that Church that *Jesus Christ* is Head of : And he that hath Faith herein, hath the *True Faith* mentioned in the

11th of the *Hebrews*; and is that Faith deliver-  
 ed to the Saints, for which they are to contend  
 (but not Fight nor Persecute, since the way of  
 their contending for it was by Argument and  
 Suffering, and not Persecuting) according as  
 the Apostle saith, *Gal. 5. 14. The fulfilling of the  
 whole Law, is in Loving our Neighbour as our  
 selves.* And vers. 6. saith, *Circumcision nor Un-  
 circumcision availeth nothing, but Faith that work-  
 eth by Love* : But Creed-making Works not by  
 Love, but Strife and Envy, and is almost  
 always followed by Persecution. In short,  
 that Faith which works by Love, is the Im-  
 mediate Gift of God, that enables Man wholly  
 to trust or depend (without any manner of  
 doubt, with respect to his Body as well as Soul)  
 on the Invisible God; but such an intire Trust  
 and Depending cannot be where purity of Heart  
 is not: And a Thousand Articles of Faith will  
 not make one Heart Clean, it being made *so  
 only* by that Spirit or Gift abovesaid: So that  
 he who hath the true Faith is not without the  
 true Love (for they are inseparable) which  
 worketh (like Leaven) every Man into Humi-  
 lity, Patience, and all other Christian Vertues;  
 and against such there is no legal Law: But  
 to bring forth contrary Fruit (such as Im-  
 morality, Ambition, Envy, Wrath, Persecu-  
 tion, &c.) As it is no part of the Christian Re-  
 ligion, so it is very unreasonable to number  
 any such among the Religious. Thus, I hope,  
 I have made it plainly appear, that 'tis not  
*Opinion*, but *Holiness* that answers the design  
 of Religion.



2dly, That the Principles which leads to Holiness, are *Few, Plain* and *Reasonable*; and consequently all that are not so (or from unquestionable Authority, such as is the Holy Scripture) may be rejected without censure: Since what is not of Faith (in Point of Principles and Doctrine) is Sin; and if we are warned not to *suffer* Sin to lie on a Brother, much more are we forbid to force him into it.

But to proceed, that there is a *Supreme Being* from which we derive *ours*, and by which we are upheld and protected, is undeniable; that we are under strong Obligations, both of Gratitude, Duty and Interest, to pay Worship, Obedience, &c. To this Supreme Authority, is likewise unquestionable; that a defect in Performance hereof renders us Culpable; and that a Violation of his Laws is of that Provoking Nature; that Justice cannot remit; this we plainly saw verified in the Persons of our first Parents, who were not only defective in their Positive Duty, but precipitated themselves into a Violation of that Negative Command their God gave them; which Transgression cost them Dear, (*viz.* Loss of Paradise) as the just Recompence of their Disobedience: Nevertheless when Justice had thus punished for Sin, Mercy was ready to commiserate; when Justice had wounded, Mercy was for Healing: Thus he that was Infinite in Justice, was as Infinite in Mercy, by promising and giving that *Seed*, which should *bruise the Head* of him that had broken off poor Man from the true Root and Foundation of his Happiness; and by the Opera-  
tion

tion thereof was he restored, made whole, and united to his Sovereign Lord again.

And this Seed *Solomon* calls *Wisdom*, through which (saith he) *Men were Saved, and Adam restored out of his Fall*, *Wisd. 10. 1.* This *Wisdom* or *Seed* was no sooner promised, but gave, Inwardly and Spiritually (though not Outwardly 'till the fulness of time, that *Jesus Christ* was Born of the *Virgin*) and hereof all good Men, through every Generation, partook, and were made *so* by the Power and Vertue thereof: *But when the Unrighteous went away from her* (and would not be govern'd thereby) *in his Anger he Perished, wherewith, he Murthered his Brother*, vers. 3. Here was and is the Original of all Persecution about Religion ever since: For by going from her, Men lose that Allegiance and Duty that is incumbent on them, by which they first make themselves Enemies to God; secondly to *Jesus Christ*, to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is committed, that he by his Authority might subject them to himself in Righteousness, Holiness and Truth: And lastly, by their Pride and Ambition, Enemies to one another.

And this is likewise the true Reason there are so many *Lo-heres* and *Lo-theres* in the World, and so much *Irreligion, Unreasonableness, Immorality* and *Hypocrisie*, as there is. Nor can we reasonably expect it otherwise, till Men come to that Principle in themselves, that will subject them to their Maker and Redeemer. And then, as a Natural Consequence, will there be true Love and Peace one towards another.

Now, as was said in the beginning of this Discourse, we are not left without a Witness (*viz.*) We are not left to our selves, nor without some sense of a God, nor of the Obligations we are under to him, according to Holy Writ; compare *Mal.* 3. 5. with *Acts* 14. 17. And this Witness will be faithful to us, as well to Testifie against, as for us, according to our Deeds, &c. therefore call'd the *Faithful and True Witness*, Accusing or Excusing us, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Rev.* 1. 5. This is the Law written by the Finger of God in the Heart of Man.

This is the Divine *Logos*, that speaks to and in the Soul, in which is hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; *It is the true Light that Enlightneth every Man that cometh into the World*: It is the Inspeaking Voice that saith, *This is the Way, walk in it*, *Isaiah*.——It is to the World of Souls, as the Sun in the Firmament is to Bodies, gives Light, and causeth Production.

It is the Inward and Spiritual Appearance of the promised Seed, that *Bruiseth the Head of the Serpent*, within us, as it did outwardly in that Blessed Person (*viz.*) *Jesus Christ*, when he Triumphed over him in our Natures; for in him, the Fulness was, but in us by Measure, every one according to the good Pleasure of God.

Finally, this is that **One Universal Principle** (tho' express'd after many, and by different Names) of Light and Life, which Impowers that Soul that receives it (in perfect Love) for its Guide and Monitor, To fulfil Gods holy Will, which is our holiness: And



And as he that resists it, incurs Damnation; so he that Conforms to her Divine Instruction, will not fail of obtaining an Assurance of that Incorruptible Crown of Blessedness, which God the Righteous Judge freely bestows on every such Believing and Subject Soul, 2 Tim. 4. 8.

By this time, I hope I have made good my Second Assertion, (*viz.*) *That the Principles that leads to Holiness are not many, nor perplexing the Brains or Understanding, but plain and familiar, and answers the reasonable part of Mankind:* Since in it is nothing above the Reach of Right Reason to comprehend, as in it is nothing below what is Essential to our Peace and Happiness here, and Blessedness hereafter.

3dly, Since then it plainly appears, the Religion of God's making is not such a *Mysterium Magnum*, as by some Persons it hath been Represented, for what Reason I will not say, (though 'tis not hard to guess:) I say, since Religion has so much Reason in it, and carries such clear Demonstration with it; the making so many Tedious Unintelligible, as well as Unreasonable Articles of Faith, with this *Anathema* at the Tail of them, *viz. Without which 'tis impossible for a Man to be saved*, has been a vast Prejudice to the Credit of Religion in general; tho' it hath gratified a Party, whose Consciences are stretch'd so wide, that nothing that has the appearance of Profit or Honour will make 'em Keck: Yet at the same time, the Man of Religion indeed, who makes Conscience both of his Words and Works, chooseth

rather to Suffer both Reproach and Persecution, than Subscribe to what he cannot understand.

I cannot forbear thinking, that most Religious People know, there are many Points of Divinity which are most certainly *Believed*; yet perhaps are rarely exprest: And he that Believes them, has the advantage and benefit of his *Own Faith*, by his so having it to himself, which ought not therefore to be imposed on another; since all Truths, profitable for us to know, are not seen at once: Nor are all Men a-like capable of understanding them.

Besides, the common Prejudice of Education should be considered: And therefore to dismember Persons from the Church, purely for Errors they *cannot* help, is very hard: But to Unchristian them, because they cannot Subscribe what they *do not know*, nor are able to comprehend, and which their Adversaries have *only* Conjectures about, is so Barbarous, Irreligious, and Unreasonable, that words are too short to set it forth.

But in my Opinion, nothing can be more reasonable, or tend more to the Promotion of Religion in general, than for all Parties in Conjunction with the Civil Magistrate, to make that the Creed of all Perswasions, which all Perswasions agree is *Sacred*, and of Divine Authority; to wit, the *Holy Scriptures*, because they excite to Holiness: And where any Difference shall arise about the Interpretation thereof, that may affect the Body Politick, the Civil Authority should Interpose, to *Oblige* all Parties

Parties to *Unite in Interest* (*viz.*) the *Peace* and *Prosperity* of the Nation; if he could not Oblige them to *Unite in Charity*, the Christian and Religious Bottom. The First, the Magistrate hath Power to command: The Latter, if we are true Christians, cannot be denied.

But where either Party which is uppermost (for the Wheel goes round) shall exercise their Power, *first* to exalt themselves in Honour and Wealth upon the *Credit* of Religion; and *secondly*, abuse that Power to make Traps for their Neighbours, by cramming Creeds, &c. down their Throats, which cannot be understood by them, and which the others have no Authority from Holy Scripture to impose: Most certain it is; As it is to turn Persecutors for Religion, when Religion it self forbids it, and is in it self both Unreasonable and Irreligious; so it is of that Provoking Nature, that will in the End inevitably draw down God's Righteous Judgments, to the Desolation of that Kingdom, or Commonwealth, where such Methods are taken, and finally prove the overthrow of that Church which promotes such a Work. But without looking for a Stroke from the Hand of Heaven, 'tis no good Policy, since 'tis the first Foundation to Schism.

For had not the Church of *Rome* imposed more Articles than she had Authority from Holy Scripture for, and made an unreasonable Market of *Indulgences*, &c. the *Protestants* could have had no reasonable Colour for their Revolt; but the first is true, and so is the last.



Again, had the Church of *England* imposed no more than the Holy Scripture had warranted Her in Matters of Faith; nor any Discipline, but what might reasonably be Collected from them: Nor any other Practices by her *Clergy* than what was Honest, Just, and of good Report, as becomes Ministers of Jesus Christ; the *Dissenters* Separation had been a Ridiculous Thing. Whereas it appears now to be so Grounded, that the Strength of the Church is not able to Convince nor Confute them.

In short, if the 39 *Articles* were not half so many as they are, and more clear than some of them appear to be. And if the *Creed*, commonly called *Athanasius's*, were reduced to that of the *Apostle's*, or *Nicene-Creed*, which as they are less Perplexing, so they are as Substantial, and would engage more to unite in the Truth thereof, who are now too often rather Stumbled, than Excited to be Religious: It would tend more to Peace, if not Unity.

Again, if the *Presbyterians Assembly of Divines* had not made such a horrid Blunder, in their *Westminster Confession of Faith*, as they did, by Asserting such and such Principles for Orthodox, with a pretended Authority from Holy Scripture, which, upon Examination, no more answered their Design, than the first of *Job* proves the Divinity of Christ; they might at that time have enlarged their Dominion, and, like the *Jews*, made *Profelytes of the Covenant* in abundance: But when People see, first, an Arbitrary Power to impose; and, secondly,

*secondly*, so much weakness in their Proofs, no marvel if they were left also, as they left others.

Nor had the Synod of *Dort* any better success, especially in *Holland*, where the Remedy prov'd worse than the Disease: Nor was *England* free from the dire Effects thereof; as all *Europe* felt the like by the Council of *Trent*.

'Tis very evident, that the several Councils, Convocations, Synods, &c. that have been called to settle *Articles of Faith*, have rarely avoided Exercising such a Dogmatical Power, to the straining the Principles of Religion, beyond, not only the Line of Holy Scripture, but the Staple of Reason and common Sense, to the vast prejudice of Religion, And therefore no wonder if the World be filled with Schisms. In days of old, the Ancient Land-Marks were not to be removed, without a severe Penalty; and most certain it is, neither wider nor straighter must we set them, than the Holy Men of old did, unless by the same Authority they had: And how that was, the *Holy Scripture* plainly demonstrates.

And until *That* be our general *Creed*, without far-fetch'd Consequences, we cannot reasonably expect to be free from the trouble that attends, what is called *Schism*; and where that is, Persecution commonly follows; for Non-conformity, though it be but to an Image, and not the true God: And what a Prejudice that is to the State, to be torn in pieces by Factions (to say nothing of Religion it self,) woful Experience hath taught us. This, with the  
Immorality

Immorality and Ambition of the *Clergy* in King *James* the First's Time, laid the Foundation for the Ruine of his Son, and with him Three Kingdoms, according to *F. O.* in his Observations on *K. J.*'s Reign: " Our Divines (saith he) for the generality, did Sacrifice more to *Bacchus* than *Minerva*."

" Again, nor did the notorious Debauchery of the *Episcopal Clergy* add a little to the Rent, (made by those called *Puritans*.)"

" Nor did the sudden Translations of Bishops, from less to greater Sees, give time to visit sufficiently their respective Charges; being more intent upon the Receipt of such Taxes, as a long abused Custom had Estitated them in, than upon Reformation: For from the Pulpit came all our future Miseries; God not being served there as he ought, &c."

I take the more notice of this, because himself was no favourer of *Puritanism*, but of the other side.

For the Security therefore of the Government, Ease of the Magistrate, and Peace of the People, *Creeeds* not to be found in Holy Scripture: And an Ambitious and Immoral *Clergy*; by the common Voice of Mankind, should be totally Rejected.

Which leads me to my Fourth Proposition (viz.) *That Liberty of Conscience is every Man's Birth-right.*

4thly, By Liberty of Conscience, is not meant a Liberty to Licentiousness; for no Man that is *Compos Mentis*, will pretend Matter of Conscience to commit Wickedness. But by Liberty



Liberty of Conscience, I mean, for every Man to go to what place he please to worship God, in that way he is perswaded is the Right Way, and to hear that Preacher that he likes best. As for Instance, I cannot see any Prejudice to the State to Indulge the *Jews* in the Exercise of their Religion; which, of all Perswasions, has the least Reason to desire or expect it; yet, we find *our* Superiours have thought fit to indulge them *already*, as well as *other States* do; for they rarely suffer for their Religion: Perhaps 'tis because the Blessing that attends Sufferers is none of their Portion. However, if they Sin against their own Knowledge (but we cannot say they do) they will suffer for it, from his Hand that knows their Hearts: But if they know no better, 'tis unreasonable to Punish Men for what they cannot help. Therefore their Synagogues, provided they do nothing against the State, can be no Prejudice to the Government. Nor can Praying to Saints, Auricular Confession, Pilgrimages, &c. hurt the State, provided those that have the vanity to think such things their Duty, may appear Publickly to perform it. But if they are deprived thereof, no opportunity will be neglected to get that by stealth; the Omission of which they firmly believe cannot be forgiven them: And when such Persons get together in that manner, they are not only Incouraged to continue that Practice, but are Warmed with a Belief, that these Rugged Paths are the only Way to Glory; and therefore in time will be so inured to it, that they will bid Defiance even

even to Death it self; which not seldom is the most effectual Way to increase, and not suppress any Faction.

Add to this the Desperateness of those who are made so; first, upon the Score of their Suffering for Religion; but now turn'd to *Conspire* the Destruction of that Power, by which they are oppress'd. Here it is Plots are laid, the design of which is to render Vengeance on those that have not remembred Mercy, and to ease themselves from Suffering. But let Men have Ease, and they will not Plot the destruction of that Power that they owe their Ease and Safety to. But where they, or any other shall abuse this Liberty, to the prejudice of another in Person or Estate, the Magistrate, as the common Father of the People, hath Power to Interpose, and give that Correction to the Delinquent, as is his just Demerit: To which every Party, except the Guilty, will say *Amen*, and this is to do by them, not as they do by Protestants, but as they ought to do.

That the *Episcopalian* should be Persecuted, because the first Reform from Popery, was to Presbitery, in *Scotland*, is so unreasonable, that nothing of Religion is to be seen in it, unless you will call a Mad Fiery Zeal Religion. The Dismal and Tragical Story we have upon Record, of the Madness of that People, since the last Revolution in that Kingdom, as well as in the unhappy Civil Wars at home in *England*, are so many, and so black, that it becomes highly necessary, that the *Episcopalian*, who is now the National Church in *England*, lay a good

good Foundation for time to come: Since what hath been, may be. For no Man in his Senses can think a Church governed by Bishops is such a Heresie as deserves that Evil Treatment they have had for that only Reason: Nor are the 39 *Articles* so Remote from Christianity, nor the Discipline of the Church of *England* so void of Defence, that for believing the one, and practising the other, they should be exposed to Sufferings, when the Government is in other Hands: Let the Errors be what they will, they hold or profess, (since no Body but themselves are the worse for them) 'tis Unreasonable and Irreligious for the *Presbyterian* to Persecute them, as in *Scotland*.

Nor can it be thought Reasonable or Religious, that the *Presbyterian* and *Independent*, &c. should be obliged to go to hear *Common-Prayer*, when themselves, *in their own Opinion*, have a more Lively Way of Worship. And if the Elders of those Churches take the same Care, that a Bishop in the Church of *England* is obliged to, (*viz.*) See that the Ministers feed the Flock with good Doctrines, tending to Peace, Holiness, and good Examples amongst Men, what Reason hath the Church of *England* to be angry, because they do not go all to one Place, since both aim at one thing (*viz.*) The Promotion of Religion in General, and the Peace of the Nation.

Again, What harm can the *Anabaptist*, by his Water-Dispensation, do? He may by his zealous and strict Living, and laborious Preaching, Influence many to the reforming their  
Lives



Lives and Manners; if not, to the thorough Renovation of their Mind: Nor can his reclusive private Life be any Prejudice to the State, since there are Hands enough besides to be employed. If he has any Principles that are either Inconsistent with Religion or Government, so long as he keeps them to himself, no Body is the worse for them besides himself: But when it appears otherwise, 'tis time enough then to punish: For 'tis both Irreligious and Unreasonable to punish Men for what *we only suppose they will do.*

Nor can the *Quaker* be left as a Sacrifice to any other Party, with Reason, or Religion, because of his Singularity; since he pretends as much Conscience as any of the rest, and ventures to come to the Test of Holy Scripture with the most Orthodox: But let his Errors be what they will (for 'tis our Unhappiness, that we are apt to think well of our own, and too meanly of our Neighbours) notwithstanding his Hat lies in the way, we never found him to give the Magistrate any Trouble, unless it was when forc'd before him, about his Religion; which he cannot help: If he is mistaken, none will suffer for that mistake but himself: And he is assured also, that one mistake is not like to be corrected by another. But all those he hath separated from, dare not pretend to be free from Mistakes, even in the best part of their Religion: And since the highest is upon Supposition and Conjecture, 'tis the more unreasonable to oblige Conformity. But that the *Quaker* is for promotion of the design  
of

of Religion (*viz.*) *Holiness* is undeniable; if he carries it too far, 'tis an Error of the Right Hand, and his Zeal ought to be cherish'd by the common Father of the People; since all his Profelytes ease the Magistrate of that trouble, People of greater Liberty bring upon him.

Add to this his Industry; for as upon the Principles of his Religion he is prohibited the Diversions of Humane Life, which others esteem Lawful; so 'tis certain the Mind of Man must be diverted with something: And therefore he, by turning *Quaker*, turneth the Stream of his Diversion to good Husbandry, as Planting, Improving Land, keeping the Poor at work, &c. And for Trade, 'tis demonstrable, beyond Contradiction, that he is not one of the least, or most useless, both in City and Country: Nor is he one of the least Benefactors to the Government.

Let every Man then be encouraged to Sow, to Plant, to learn Trades, to improve his Stock and Capacity for his own, for his Posterity's, and for the Nation's Good, by an intire Liberty of Conscience, that no Man may suffer in Body or Estate, for the Errors, or supposed Errors of his Mind, and that only in things relating to another World: And so shall the Civil Magistrate have great Peace, and the People have that Tranquility that attends sitting *under their own Vine, where none can make them afraid.*

To Conclude, he that is born Heir to an Estate, is not Heir because he is of such a Church, but because he is his Father's Son:  
And

And if his Inclination, Education or Judgment, lead him out of the National Road to work out his own Salvation, 'tis very unreasonable, as well as contrary to the Fundamental Laws of the Land, that he should therefore lose his Birthright. (Nevertheless, as the *Papists* cannot be said to be true Subjects of this Kingdom, because of their Subjection to the *Pope*, &c. And our Legislators has for Reasons of State thought fit to Enact the contrary. I confess 'tis but reasonable for them to Renounce their Foreign Yoak, before they are Intituled to the Privileges of other Subjects.)

And indeed great pitty it is, that all Parties are not hearty herein; for none knows but that those that are otherwise minded; are making Rods for themselves or Posterity, to be whipt withal. But leave Conscience Uncramp'd, and by this means, the Civil Magistrate will always be Umpire between the several Parties that are under his Government, for as he protects all, so all will fly to him as to their Common Sanctuary, where the Laws will decide all Controversies, or Disputes, that may arise. And if the Civil Authority is pleased to make one Party as the Eldest Son; that Elder may not have Power to spoil the Younger. For this Reason I Conceive with Submission, that *Holland* has given us an Excellent Example; in which, tho' they have no National Church, as here in *England*, yet the Magistrate gives a preference as he pleaseth, and therefore takes care to maintain what he so prefers, out of the Common Stock, which is a Just and Reasonable



Reasonable way, and by that means all Parties contribute to the upholding what the Magistrate is willing to prefer ; and here is no Imposition upon those that do not think, as the Magistrate thinks ; nor is *A. B.* compell'd to pay *C. D.* for what *A. B.* thinks were better let alone ; But *A. B.* is obliged to render to *Cesar*, what is *Cesar's* (*viz.*) Taxes, Tribute, &c. and if *Cesar* will out of that Common Stock, maintain that Man or Ministry that he prefers, he ought not to be disobeyed ; for there are perhaps many Thousands of People under his Care, who have not the Discretion, no more than Children, to choose for themselves.

And therefore 'tis but reasonable, the Magistrate should provide for them that labour to Instruct the People in Religion and good Manners, over whom, in chief, the Magistrate himself is over-seer.

5thly, That Morality may be encouraged, since it is so great a part of Religion, that without it none can be Religious.

Were the foregoing Propositions well considered, there would be the less need to say much upon this Head, since it would be for the most part *actum agere* ; for let but the Immoralist, the Ambitious, the Tenacious, the Persecutor be discouraged ; in short, let Vice be under the Displeasure and Correction of the Civil Magistrate, and Virtue or Morality will naturally be encouraged. The encouragement that is here intreated is, that no Man that is a Just, a Temperate and Honest Man, that keeps him-

self clear of those Sins, that shut Men out of  
 the Kingdom of Heaven, may be either expo-  
 sed to Contempt, Scorn or Persecution; nor  
 look'd upon as a common Nuisance, nor as the  
 5th Wheel of a Waggon, but that he may have  
 that Respect and Preference by the Govern-  
 ment, that his virtuous Life hath justly meri-  
 ted; for where a Man of a vicious Life shall  
 have the Smiles of Authority, whilst a Man  
 of better Talents, and a good Life, shall be (for  
 God's sake) slighted and despised: This is an  
 apparent discouragement to Morality, and  
 how prejudicial that may be to the State in  
 time, as well as to Youth at present, is not  
 hard to determine: For Young Men will not  
 apply themselves to the Study of Virtue, to  
 recommend themselves for the Service of their  
 Country, when they see Examples of Vice be-  
 fore their Eyes under Promotion: But if Vir-  
 tue were the only Qualification to advance to  
 Honour, Power and Profit, and that none but  
 those that were Educated in her School, should  
 be intrusted with the Charge of the Nation;  
 the Nobility and Gentry, as well as common  
 People, would find themselves obliged to take  
 care of their Posterity, to keep from every  
 Vicious Path, since that leads to nothing but  
 Destruction both of Body and Soul, here, and  
 hereafter. True it is, many good Laws we  
 have in *England*, both against Swearing, Drun-  
 kenness, Whoring and Gaming, &c. now 'tis  
 to no purpose to catch a Porter and make him  
 pay 12 d. for an Oath; or send a Kitchen-  
 Wench to *Bridewell* for Twelve Months, for  
 having

having a small Child, whilst Persons of higher Rank shall by practice repeat that every day without Censure, which these poor Persons must suffer for, though but once committed.

But to stop the growth of Impiety, and to retrieve the Nation from that Debauchery it is now fallen into; let every Man that is guilty of any manner of Debauchery or Immorality, be mark'd out as an Enemy to the Peace and Tranquility of his Country, by being rendered incapable of doing any thing for his King and Country, till he hath repented, and reformed his Life: And if this Method were begun at Court, Vertue would grow in Fashion in the City, and so should Morality be encouraged in all parts of the Country: With these things God Almighty would be well pleased, and pour out his Blessings upon us: With these things the King and his Great Counsel would find abundance of Ease, and Great Wealth, as well as Immortal Honour. With these things the City and Country would be safe, and eased of that continual Vexation and Charge, that the contrary always brings upon them; nor need we fear Foreign Strength, nor Domestick Plots, for Heaven it self would Fight for us.

True it is, that altho' every One that is a Just and Temperate Man (in short that is a Moral Man) may not be a good Man, for tho' his outside may be without blemish, his inside may be too faulty, and very unclean; yet no good Man can be so without the Moral Man's outside, nor will those lusty Believers, that



that pretend to Church Priviledges, and by Presumption (not Faith) lay claim to Promises, find their account, but themselves irreparably mistaken at last, if there be any Truth in him that said, *First make clean the inside, and the outside will be clean also.*

By outsides we are known one of another, and to one another, and by outsides we make our Judgments of each other; and if the outside is not fair, we are sure we must lay by our Reason to think the inside can be otherwise than foul, and how Consonant that is with Religion, is above declared; nor can it make any better mixture than Iron and Clay.

Let Men that have clean outsides then be commended and encouraged for Example's sake, and if they are not so, but Hypocrites, God will find them out, as he did *Ananias* and *Sapphira*.—But' sure I am, the Government will have the Advantage of that Conformity, if it be no more than Hypocrisie in the *Conformist*.

FINIS.



Page 19, line 4. Read Characteristick. p. 29. l. last, r. for, p. 30.  
 l. 1. r. for. l. 15. for so, r. &c. l. 19. r. Expression. l. 25. r.  
 however avail. p. 61. l. 26. r. or Modern.